

Washington, DC - Thursday, Representatives Harry Teague (NM-02), Adam Schiff (CA-29), and Dave Reichert (WA-08) will hold a briefing on Katie's Law (H.R. 4614) a bipartisan DNA collection bill that would encourage states to maximize the potential of forensic DNA to solve and prevent violent crimes by collecting a DNA sample upon arrest – at the same time as fingerprints -- for certain felony crimes. The law has been adopted in 21 states.

H.R. 4614 is named after Katie Sepich, from Carlsbad, New Mexico, who was 22 years old when she was brutally raped and murdered. DNA under Katie's fingernails helped the police develop a DNA profile for her killer and this profile was included in the national database where all DNA samples are kept. Three years later in 2006, the New Mexico DNA database finally matched the unknown profile to Gabriel Avilla who had been arrested for several other crimes, including a felony burglary in November 2003. Katie's Law was not enacted in New Mexico until January of 2007. If New Mexico had required a DNA sample for Avilla's felony arrest in November 2003, investigators might have solved Katie's murder sooner and caught Avilla before he was left free to roam the streets for three years.

Confirmed speakers include:

- **Jayann Sepich.** After the horrific experience of losing her daughter Katie to a violent crime, Jayann made it her mission to see legislation passed in all 50 states to mandate taking DNA upon felony arrest.
- **Ed Smart.** In 2002, Ed's daughter, Elizabeth Smart was kidnapped from her home and found alive just a few miles from her home. He is an advocate for passing a Katie's Law on the state level in Utah and is doing all he can to help lawmakers advance legislation that would mandate arrestee DNA collection.
- **Sheriff J.E. Chip Harding of Albemarle County, Virginia.** (which includes the city of Charlottesville). Sheriff Harding has been a champion for using DNA to solve crimes and is an

advocate of arrestee DNA collection

- **District Attorney Mitch Morrissey of Denver, Colorado.** Mr. Morrissey recognized the value of using DNA science early on and prosecuted the first trial in Denver that utilized DNA. In addition, his DNA Resource section on his website has become an international resource for prosecutors.

Invited:

- **Governor Martin O'Malley, Maryland.** Governor O'Malley championed a state law that was passed in 2009 requiring arrestee DNA collection. He has been quoted as saying that he is a "card-carrying" believer in DNA technology and that DNA collection helped Maryland achieve an 11 percent drop in homicides last year (If Governor O'Malley cannot attend he will send an expert from the Maryland Office of Crime Control and Prevention).

Briefing is open to interested media, press availability immediately following.

WHAT: Katie's Law Briefing

WHEN: Thursday, March 4th, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

WHERE: